



# The Swazi Sojourn



Issue 5, Volume 2

May 2005

## One Big Party: Masses Celebrate King's Birthday

By Rebecca Friedberg  
*Swazi Sojournal*

King Mswati III marked his 37th birthday with an elaborate celebration at the old International Trade Fair Grounds in Manzini on 19 April 2005. Dressed to the nines, Mswati wore a striking red and yellow army uniform embellished with shining medals while his wives (emakhosikati) radiated royalty in their colorful flowing gowns and glittering jewelry.

In his formal address to the multitudes, His Majesty said he wanted only two gifts for his birthday: peace and the eradication of poverty. His midday speech reassured the crowd of his commitment to uphold Swazi culture while moving the country forward, and of his intention to "continue making good relations and friendship with other countries in pursuing the national goals." He reminded the crowds to protect themselves from HIV/AIDS infection and of the need to assist orphans who have been left heads of households by the deadly pandemic.

Over 15,000 people are reported to have attended the party. So popular was the celebration that hundreds of people were turned away at the gates due to shortage of space in the stadium, which was packed to capacity

by 9:00 am. Many vendors spent the night at the grounds to secure the best spots, while others arrived as early as 4:00 am. A lucrative business ensued for those well-placed vendors, who reported the hottest selling items to be ice blocks and popcorn.

With extensive coverage of the celebration by local media and such massive attendance, SoJo staff were surprised at the difficulty they had in eliciting first hand impressions of the event. Few volunteers or Peace Corps staff attended the festivities. When asked their reasons, one reported he had not received an invitation. Others were busy or out of town. A few others indicated that it seemed an extravagant waste of money in a country where so many people are living in poverty.

A few lucky Peace Corps volunteers, however, had front row seats to the birthday event. While thousands stood for hours in the blazing sun and others scaled trees and rooftops for prime viewing of the festivities, Brigid O'Brian and Blia Yang were granted fleeting VIP status. Traditionally only those with formal invitations are admitted to the shaded upfront area but these PCVs, along with Teresa Reff, Stephanie Sauer, Lisa Grossman, Gavin Dia and Arlene Shaffer, enjoyed the festive atmosphere and cultural experience in comfort and style. They witnessed pro-



Bobabe march past soldiers at the King's birthday.

cessions of traditional dancers wearing vibrant emahia, impressive drum and brass corps, Swazi and Zulu warriors and local high school performances.

Overall the day was reportedly well organized and appearances were punctual. Those who attended enjoyed the traditional Swazi experience and felt well cared for. And King Mswati III thanked everyone for making his special day a success.

### In This Issue of the Sojo

- Policy corner debuts  
page 2
- Director chats on IST  
page 3
- Mikaela Kooiker profiled  
page 4
- Morgan Smith on Kevin Okun  
page 5
- The Diva reviews Divas Live  
page 6
- Afro pop to  
page 7
- Meet Make Thandie  
page 9

### Jon Mitchell leaves Swaziland for Med School



photo by Annie Mohr

Keep in touch with Jon Mitchell by e-mail at [j\\_mitch\\_10@yahoo.com](mailto:j_mitch_10@yahoo.com). He says the Red Sox continue to play good ball. Guy, you are missed!

**Hello all of you Swazi Group 1 PCVs - Good News!**

Your *Readjustment Allowance 1/3 checks* will now be received about 45 days in advance of your COS date, Nov 25. The checks will be DHL'd to post. Once processed, Volunteers may request payment of allotments or withdrawals by Electronic Funds Transfer (EFT) to a bank in the U.S. Volunteers may also request that a 1/3 payment be sent via EFT to a stateside bank. The 1/3 EFT payments sent to a stateside bank will arrive at the time of COS. Final payments can also be made via EFT and will be processed by HQ finance office within one week after it receives notice from post about your COS. At this time Peace Corps Finance Office can only make EFT payments to a U.S. based Bank.

**If you want your one third check to be sent to your US based bank account, you should send us your full banking information by May 30. the banking information we require are:**

- Your account name ( the name shown on your check or savings booklets)
- Your account number
- Your bank's name
- Your bank's routing number
- Your bank's address.

*Please contact Oghale or Sandla if you need additional information.*



Each month we will focus on policies and guidelines written in the PCV handbook. Hopefully our corner will inform, teach and perhaps inspire PCVs in their work. Each PCV is responsible for negotiating language tutoring fees with his/her tutor. PCVs are allowed a maximum payment rate of E20 per hour and no more than E320 per month. It is in your best interest to

negotiate a lower per hour rate so you get more training out of the E320 per month. Please approach this payment and the tutoring as a business transaction and not a charity from you or the Peace Corps to your tutor. If a Volunteer chooses to join an organized language class, the monthly amount will not be increased and class tuition will not be prepaid. Reimbursements and or payments will be deposited to your account along with your living allowance after approval. The turn around time for reimbursements/payments may take up to 2 months. It is therefore best to plan and inform your language tutor of this possibility when you first negotiate to take classes. Generally, PCVs find it best and we advise PCVs to take classes for a full month or two, sign and submit the language payment form, and wait till they get the amounts owed to their language tutors before actually paying the language tutors. If you are not already doing this, please try to negotiate with your tutor. If you are finding it tough to negotiate, please call Sandla, Shirley or Musa to help you speak with or explain to the tutor. Tutoring reimbursement forms must be completed fully and correctly, including all necessary signatures. For accounting purposes, each forms should represent a full month, e.g. November. Please do not submit forms for Oct. 23-Nov. 22.

**in brief**

**Leave policy explained**

Volunteers have asked for clarification on Post's Leave Policy. The information below is from page 52 of the PC/Swaziland PCV Guide to Policies and Procedures and it conforms with Peace Corps policy worldwide.

**Out-of-Site Leave**

Volunteers are allowed an out-of-site leave one weekend per month, i.e. from Friday afternoon after work till Sunday afternoon. PCVs wishing to use this out-of-site leave weekend must inform their APCD prior to taking the time off. Please note that all out-of-site contact reporting information is still required when you take this leave.

In addition to annual leave, Volunteers are excused from work on holidays when their host country counterparts do not work. If you travel away from your site but within Swaziland on national holidays of less than seven days, this will not be considered leave. If a Volunteer travels out of the country on a Swazi national holiday it is considered to be leave. Volunteers are not excused from work on U.S. holidays unless leave is taken.

Please see pages 49-52 of the PCV Guide to Policies and Procedures for more information on PCV leave and travel.

**World Book Day raffle**

Thank you everyone who bought tickets . Close to 200 tickets were sold and the Peace Corps community was about 1/3 of those. Although ticket sales were not a huge success (the concept of a raffle seemed new) the raffle itself was excellent. Out of the 25 prizes eight went to PCVs and two went to Lindiwe Dladla, who was present. Prizes are in the boxes. The chickens went to a primary school teacher. Thanks y'all.

-Mikaela Kooiker

**UPCOMING HOLIDAYS ..**

- Sun, May 1 **Labor Day**
- Thurs, May 5 **Ascension Day**
- Mon, May 30 **Memorial Day**
- Mon, July 4 **US Independence Day**
- Fri, July 22 **Public Holiday Umhlanga**
- Aug/Sept **Reed Day** (to be determined)
- Mon, September 5 **US Labor Day**
- Tues, September 6 **Somhlolo Day**
- Mon, October 10 **Columbus Day**
- Fri, November 11 **Veteran's Day**
- Thurs, November 24 **Thanksgiving**
- Nov/Dec **Incwala Day** (to be determined)
- Mon, December 26 **Christmas Day**  
(observed)

Note: the office is closed on these days

**Caitlin Coogan**



The Sojo staff hopes your farunkle heals quickly and you don't need to spend 11 days in the hospital because of arm pit surgery.

# Director's Chat

An update from Country Director Pattie Austin

It was a pleasure to see you all at the recent IST and to have the chance to address some of your programming and administrative concerns. I want to use some of my column time this month to update you on some of the issues you raised.

We will be soon be distributing copies of the Peace Corps organization chart with pictures and names of all office staff. Hopefully this will help you get to know the staff a little better. In addition, there will be a list of job responsibilities so you'll have an idea of who to ask for specific things.

You will also see a "Suggestion Box" in the volunteer lounge. This box can be used to provide suggestions for improved volunteer support. Anonymity in writing suggestions is fine but if you want a personalized response, please provide your name. I will be the person reading the suggestions!

Some volunteers have commented that they don't know what happens to the Quarterly Reports and they question the value of such reports because of the lack of feedback. Let me share with you the Life Cycle of the Quarterly Reports: the Quarterly Reports are first read and analyzed by the programming staff and then given to me to review. I want the staff to use these reports as a method of gathering information about your work in the field and learning what challenges you face that we might help you with. I also use the reports to keep our government and NGO partners informed of PCV activities. This month I sent 3 PCV reports to the Ministry of Health, Ministry of Education, the Deputy Prime Minister, NERCHA, and the Inkhosakati laMatsebula. You will know if your report is sent because I will ask your permission first. Lastly, the Quarterly Reports are placed in your personnel folders. When you ask me to write you a reference for graduate school or new employment, I will be able to sing your praises better if I have a record of your accomplishments, challenges and integration progress. So, keep 'em coming!

Finally, some purely informational items: we have been interviewing candidates for the Safety and Security officer position and hope to have our new SSO in place very soon. Also, it is fairly certain that we will receive approximately 51 thousand dollars of PEPFAR (Presidents Emergency Plan For AIDS Relief) money for HIV/AIDS programming in Swaziland. The staff and I are discussing programming options in light of the reporting/monitoring/evaluating guidelines we have been given. Know that we will be taking your concerns into account as we plan for how to best use this money.

In closing, I am reminded of Vincent's portrayal of the CD at IST. So,

"HAVE A NICE DAY!"

*Pattie*

## News from the training desk

By SimangaNtando

Greetings from the Training unit! I hope you enjoyed your IST conference. As the preparations for this year's PST intensify, I would like to remind all volunteers that their input in training (giving constructive ideas to the training team, taking part in hosting Trainees at your sites during Volunteer site visits, coming to the training center to do presentations, and in any other way) is welcome.

PST will be eight weeks this year and therefore not all volunteers who might want to be involved with training will get the opportunity. There will be limited spaces in our calendar of training events for volunteers who want to assist with training. These should be volunteers with a positive attitude towards training, ready to model professional behavior to Trainees and willing to work the relevant coordinators in shaping up your presentation.

If you would like to be one of these volunteers, please send a short note to Simanga stating what would be the topic or interest area of your presentation under the general PST topic areas of programming, training, language and cross-culture, medical and safety and security. **Make sure this information gets to Simanga on or before May 20, 2005. Any requests coming to me later than this date will not be considered.**

Let's work together to make this year's training even more meaningful to the Trainees.



# NEWS & NOTES

From the Peace Corps Web site

## Volunteers Show Members of Congress What Life is Like in the Peace Corps

WASHINGTON, D.C., April 13, 2005 – Recently, Peace Corps volunteers from a number of states had the opportunity to not only tell, but show members of Congress what life is like while serving in the Peace Corps.

Chairman of the House International Relations Committee Henry Hyde of Illinois recently led a congressional delegation to Panama. On their visit, some of the delegation had the opportunity to visit the site of a PCV who is working with the community of Ipeti Emberá to promote tourism. The representatives learned about the culture of the people, ate a traditional lunch, and even helped support the artesian shop that volunteers worked to develop in the community.

On the other side of the globe, U.S. Senate Minority Leader Harry Reid of Nevada led a Congressional delegation of other U.S. Senators to the country of Georgia. The Senators had a chance to visit with volunteers from their respective home states serving in the post-Soviet nation who are working in the areas of secondary education and teaching English as a foreign language. They also heard from NGOs and Georgian officials who highlighted the dedication and positive impacts the PCVs have had on their communities.

Back in December, Senators Christopher Dodd of Connecticut and Mike DeWine of Ohio met with Dominican Republic volunteers from their respective states, including Lori and Brad Mills, with whom they discussed their projects and how Peace Corps' training and communication with staff prepared them for service and is helping them feel "very safe" in the country.

For Senator Dodd, this visit to the Dominican Republic was an especially memorable one, as this was his first visit back to the site where he served as a Peace Corps volunteer from 1966 to 1968. Senator Dodd also traveled to his project site of 24 years ago in Santiago Rodriguez, near the Haitian border. Many of the people remembered him and his contributions, as they shared stories and reflected on the community's progress.

Annie Burtch, a community health volunteer, met with Senator DeWine shortly after his arrival in Nicaragua in December. Senator DeWine found his visit with Annie highly interesting, as it provided him with a perspective of the peoples' needs that only someone living and working with Nicaraguans could provide.

In Momotombo, Sierra Schroeder, an environmental education volunteer, visited with Senator Dodd and described her work with local schools and her community in environmental education programs, such as trash management, recycling, and reforestation. Sierra, Peace Corps staff, and the senator then traveled to the Leon Viejo historical site — the first capital of Nicaragua — where Sierra explained a project she and others are working on to promote tourism.



# A laugh less ordinary in a land far away

## Volunteer Profile

### Kevin Okun

by Morgan Smith

This isn't going to be an ordinary profile. But, then again, Kevin Okun isn't your ordinary volunteer. Unordinary? No, of course not. A few minutes around the 24-year old Buffalo native and you won't be able to stifle the laughter (or groans) at the constant stream of jokes and puns that emanate from Kevin, who dishes them out like a selfless Christmas elf working overtime at F.A.O. Schwartz. That is to say, he makes the crowds happy. But *extraordinary*... Now that just may bear a closer semblance to the truth. And isn't it the truth we're after?

For who else has survived being scouted, stalked, and robbed at gunpoint, only to have to enter the PCV relocation program, starting anew six months in to service? Who else has spent nearly a month in advanced medical care for the treatment of schistosomiasis, baring wrists for a daily assault from Afrikaner nurses armed with IVs? Who has single-handedly (well, almost) given birth to a prestigious monthly publication for volunteers? But wait. I am, perhaps, getting ahead of myself.

The small rural community of Manyandzeni is where Kevin, or "KO" as he's named by fellow PCVs, calls home. KO has spent much the last year making inroads with his family

and getting involved in community activities that he "never would be doing in the states". From plowing with oxen to making cement roof tiles for the community's "kagogo house", Kevin's been bringing a smile and desire to contribute to wherever he works. The kagogo project, once completed, will serve to meet the needs of area children orphaned or made vulnerable by the country's AIDS crisis. Using the project as a platform, Kevin says "I want to promote the sense that we have these people in our community and we are going to take care of them." He's been assisting in the construction of the building, working with a group of 10 *bobabe* to finish the project by the end of May. His sole lamentation – "I don't think Swazis always understand my jokes." Alas, Kevin!

Aside from well-timed quips and puns, KO's passion shines through with his relationships with children. "The kids of Swaziland are one of my favorite things here." A cousin from home sent Kevin a trio of baseball gloves, and he's been using them the last month in a concerted effort to convince kids they are not cricket equipment. Kevin has worked at the high school to help train peer educators, and often speaks at primary school assemblies on HIV education and stigma. "They get it on such a basic level.



Kevin Okun roofs the kaGogo with cement tiles that bobabe from his community made.

You kill the stigma, you have a much better chance of making this work."

"This" work is the reaching out and creating a vocabulary to share ideas, information, experiences, and there are lessons in all of it. While his med-evac proved to be less than enjoyable, it gave Kevin the opportunity to understand how "privileged" he is, and the impetus to work towards making the connections in his community that will give people access to the same privileges.

Sharing his Peace Corps experience with his parents who recently visited revealed to Kevin how deep his understanding of Swaziland has become. He played a major role in the creation of the *Sojo*, which serves as a creative resource for volunteers. And a book on this experience may be in the pipe for Kevin post-Peace Corps, with a goal of educating Americans on the realities of what AIDS is to Africa. It is a strength, supported by his family, his faith, and his humor, that keeps Kevin around – around to do "this" work.

A sort of innocent honesty comes across as Kevin speaks of his experience here. A lull in the puns as we sip on pint mugs of Castle draft, perched high on our bar stools at a local pub. But the lull is short-lived, and he's made me laugh again. And to find myself on a bar stool in sub-Saharan Africa, in the midst of the world's worst AIDS pandemic, laughing with Kevin – I can't think that any of this is ordinary.

But that's OK. I told you. This was never going to be.



Never in Buffalo, New York would Kevin have learned to plow the field with oxen. He had to come to Swaziland to pick up that skill.

# Stitching together solutions in Swaziland

By Annie Mohr

## Swazi Sojournal

Caring. Creative. Resilient. Happy. Unfortunately, only one adjective could be used for Peace Corps Swaziland volunteer Mikaela Kooiker's Swazi name. Her host family during training decided on *Jabulile*, meaning 'happiness.' Since her arrival in Swaziland in September 2003 to work as an HIV and AIDS educator, she has brought happiness to everyone she has met.

Most volunteers and staff know her as the Volunteer Advisory Committee (VAC) secretary who graciously communicates volunteer concerns with senior staff, mediates tensions between the two groups, and tries to find common ground. With 49 volunteers in the field and office staff in the city, clear communication and mutual understanding is difficult to achieve without the help of VAC. Mika decided to take on this responsibility despite the stress it can cause, because, as she says, "it's good to have a link between the volunteers and the administration. Creating good communication is a high priority to me, and I want to help in any way possible [to achieve that]."

In addition to being VAC secretary, she is also known as the maker of the infamous "Mika hat." Custom made in style and color, Mika takes great care to knit one-of-a-kind creations for friends and acquaintances. Stitch by stitch she knits, hoping to make someone's day a bit brighter and warmer during the ensuing winter months.

Yet everyone knows her for her smile, boundless energy, and laughter. In her community of Ezindwendweni, there was a lot of laughter and energy during the World Book Day celebration she organized for her community on April 15.

Her mediating skills and desire to create balance were once again manifested, in a celebration that sought to unite literate students she teaches life skills to and their often illiterate parents and community members in the common cause of reading and promoting literacy.

She began promoting literacy over a year ago, visiting homesteads and meeting with the local leaders of the *umphakatsi* to encourage the formation of a community library.

Although not everyone matched her desire for literacy immediately, she marched on knowing that with time, the community would embrace her efforts. As fellow volunteer Morgan Smith describes, Mika approaches her work with the attitude that "not

only is the glass half full; it's overflowing, and I'm going to embrace the mess, splash around in it, and work with the hardships to make it better."

In the face of adversity and struggle, it is often so easy to give up. But Mika refuses to give up - instead she takes each challenge as it comes, with a strong desire to improve the situation for the better. She now understands that in her community, she can't work wonders, but she can try to improve what is there. "For me," she says, "my community is why I'm here, so I'm trying to figure out ways to better things - and that's definitely not always reciprocal."



With her perspective in check and some patience, preparation, and passion, Ezindwendweni had their first real community event, with literacy at the helm. The events at World Book Day went along swimmingly. Community members and students were visibly quite interested and involved in what the day had to offer.

During the celebration, students performed dramas about the dilemmas that can arise within a family when some of the members are illiterate. Students sang, recited poetry, and dramatized with all their hearts.

Included in the message of the day was the

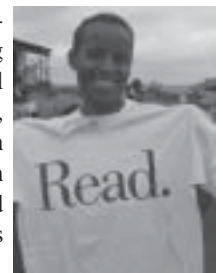
idea that literacy is central to HIV prevention and positive living. Students at the primary school created HIV awareness posters, with the winning posters displayed for the celebration. While most posters included a picture and short message, the winning entry from Grade 1 had a single sentence written, proving that literacy begins early.

Mika fiercely supports the benefits of literacy, saying it "helps in all different aspects of students' lives..it can give them information outside themselves, provide recreation, help with their studies, from and is a link to the outside world, as an alternative to radio." As the daughter of a librarian, Mika has grown up with strong roots in literacy, and was excited see the joy of reading start to take hold in her Swazi community.

Librarians from around the country were included in the celebration. A raffle was held to raise funds for the high school to start their own library. Along with the money raised, MacMillan, the US Embassy, and Swaziland National Libraries donated boxes of books to get it started. Local businesses and NGOs donated food, and the *umphakatsi* donated a live chicken for the raffle. With over 200 tickets sold, the three schools in her area will now be able to purchase either crates or bookshelves to store and display all of the books that were donated.

World Book Day was just one day in the life of Mika, but it was a hallmark of her service thus far, and was a necessary first step to raising awareness on literacy. She predicts that the "influence on the community was somewhat small, but just to have an event in the community was [groundbreaking]. [It] created awareness, and just started to open that door, which is the most important part of anything" she says.

It was one day that will have perhaps small, yet lasting impact on her community. In the meantime, Mika continues to create links and stitch together solutions with a positive and cheerful disposition, knowing that community development and HIV work isn't always easy, but she's doing what she can to improve the situation. She may not have all the answers, but by making literacy a realistic goal for Ezindwendweni, they will be able search for themselves, with more doors opened, and increased capabilities for communication.



# DivasLive 2005 rocks, flops

By The Diva

Swazi Sojournal

This was no ordinary DIVA show like the annual one held in Las Vegas by VH1. Being filmed LIVE this year in Mbabane, this one DIVA funded event gave its more than excited guests a night to remember with its unstoppable surprises and glitzy glamour.

This two-hour-too-short of an event, more like an extravaganza, began promptly at 8:30 pm and ended too soon at 10:30 pm leaving them breathless with anticipation for more. The DIVA, not leaving them high and dry, came back for an encore where for the first time in history it wasn't the DIVA who delivered it but the DIVA's guests with an off-note, off-cue sloppy rendition of Carly Simon's undoable "You're so Vain."

Brigid opened the event with a reading born from literary genius. This beautifully written, brief introduction introduced the guests to yours truly who came on stage, dressed to kill in a leopard cape, a sexy black sarong, and in an elegant head wrap. The DIVA then regally descended the spiral stairs to the sounds of Sarah Brightman's enchanting "Destination," and then followed with the night's first endearing dedication to Lisa with Brigid hiding behind an authentic Swaziland mask.

The DIVA brought the crowd to tears with her "Do You Know You're Beautiful" number. The fact that this event in one sitting had two settings: an outside amphitheatre and an inside convention center was a brilliant ploy to keep the guests on their feet. Getting the party started with a well done retake on Madonna's 2003 "Like A Virgin" version with lip-locking kisses and panty throwing free for all romp, the DIVA was able to bring the audience to the edge of their seats for the climactic ending where she finally brought the house down with an over the top "Moulin Rouge" finale with backup dancers Brigid, Meredith, and Caitlin.

With only minor technical difficulties, well-time precision, and beautiful dancers, this smooth show gave the invitees and the security guards more bang for their buck!

The DIVA surprised its patrons with special sneak peaks and a jaw dropping special bucket bathing performance where the DIVA for the first time allowed her well paid (overpaid to be exact) back up dancer touch her with not just one slap but two slaps to the cheek.

With repeated demands and requests since Esibayeni, the DIVA brought the best show in town, (let's just be honest), in the universe, to all Swaziland volunteers and for the first time you hear it here, you hear it first, the DIVA after of course much careful consideration and only for her fans has decided to bring the show this fall to Grifters for Group 1's COS.



Top: Moulin Rogue dancers Brigid O'Brien, Meredith Aggers and Caitlin Coogan learn from The Diva.

Top middle: DJ Gavin Dia spins away fromt return table to jam with The Diva and her second-rate help. Bottom middle: The Diva unsuccessfully tries to steal Aretha... err Kate Menninger's man, a former Diva bodyguard.

Bottom: The Diva knows how to shock a crowd with public bucket bathing.

By Vincent D'Agostino

Swazi Sojournal

This was not just a less than ordinary show but a complete waste of my time. Despite the fact that the show was free, I found it to be an imprisonment of sorts because I felt forced to be there against my will to support him or her or whatever you want to call it these days.

The hype was there; however, the DIVA (and I use this term loosely) failed to deliver as she has a number of times before so says a source that would like to go undisclosed. One

word of advice, DIVA, you should never make your guests get up and switch seats; you might risk the possibility of one escaping.

The venue itself was nothing but a stage less floor under a thatched roof room that resembled a convention center. The lackluster event began with a long-winded, boring introduction blandly read by the less than lovely Brigid who later poorly performed in practically all parts.

The only skit she failed to tarnish was the one where she sat still behind a mask; well, at least until she took it off. The choreography was poorly arranged by Kate, who I suspect might need eye surgery. From my vantage point it looked as if the blind were leading the blind. Gavin, Caitlin, Brigid, and Meredith were not just second rate help but from the looks of it no help at all. Each song lacked the oomph it needed to keep the guests awake; half were in a faux wide-eyed state of interest while others found themselves in a liquid stupor.

The DIVA did not dance but pranced in epileptic fits on this let down of a set in rags for costumes with incompetent, lip-mouthing backup dancers. There were horrid, indecent, unwanted exposures; there were lip-locking sights to be blinded by; there were thongs never to be worn again, and then there were finales that left less to the imagination and more to the list of reasons why at the next show I will be a no-show.

The best part of the show was the ending because the DIVA was encored with the fitting song, appropriately titled "You're So Vain" by Carly Simon that was not lip-synched to but actually sung by her newly estranged fans.

They say the DIVA was temperamental, conceited, and perhaps foul mouthed at times, but one thing is for sure, the DIVA is clueless as to what it takes to be a real DIVA.

It takes first and foremost a woman and at second best a real man to fill those high

heels...I had high hopes of this event being DIVALICIOUS but it turned out to be an event notably DIVALESS which only further reconfirmed my even higher hopes that it wouldn't have been Kevin who had taken the bullet in the back but the DIVA herself.



The play pump from the community Jon Mitchell worked in now provides water to the people he lived with.

By Daynese Santos, PCMO

**GET MOVIN'**

Remember how great you used to feel after aerobics class or running a 5K? That was a result of the release of endorphins from your brain. They provide that 'natural high'. If you've given up on exercise since arriving in country because it's too hilly, too hot, too wet, or just too weird for the locals, I encourage you to get back into form. Even 30 minutes of aerobic activity three times a week has been shown to be beneficial to the cardiovascular system but also proven to increase the sense of well being.

You may want to consider jump roping, walking, dancing (of course, in the privacy of your own room) to your favorite tunes! It doesn't have to be elaborate or expensive, just consistent.

**EMPOWERING the PEER SUPPORT NETWORK**

One of the things that I'm most excited about is working with the Peer Support Network. You've already selected PSN representatives for each region who will be trained by existing PSN reps during the first week of May. Our expectation is that when volunteers are in need of support that they will contact their regional representative. That is not to say that volunteers may not contact other PSN reps. In fact in certain situations one volunteer or even rep may feel more comfortable discussing particular issues than others. What's most important to remember is not who you talk to but that you talk to someone. Just be reassured that whatever you share with a PSN rep will be held confidential. Should a PSN rep determine that your problem requires medical or administrative intervention, they will advise you to contact the PCMO, CD, or APCD. In those instances, the PSN rep may have to notify senior staff should the volunteer fail to do so. Clearly that would be an extreme circumstance potentially endangering a volunteer's health or safety and security. Over the coming weeks you will be informed about PSN resources and activities. Your input is always welcomed.

**BACK to BASICS**

You may refer to this as Diarrhea 101. All diarrheas are treatable whether invasive or non-invasive, bacterial, parasitic or viral. You have access to that treatment, Oral Rehydration Salts (ORS). If you have diarrhea, drink one cupful of ORS after every loose stool and continue that until the diarrhea stops. If diarrhea persists for longer than a few days, collect a stool sample in a MIF kit for lab analysis. If you have bloody diarrhea or diarrhea with fever, contact the PCMO as you may need to be evaluated at the medical unit. It's a good idea to avoid foods that stimulate the bowel such as oily, spicy foods. The 'BRAT' diet (bananas, rice, applesauce and toast) is usually better tolerated. Don't forget that if you don't have ORS on hand, you can make it yourself by combining 2 tablespoons of sugar, 1/2 teaspoon of salt and 1 liter of treated water.

**HIV VACCINE RESEARCH**

So what's the hold up? Why is it that there is still no effective vaccine after 22 years of experience with HIV? Well, there are a few theories circulating. One such theory suggests that HIV is relatively resistant to inactivation by antibodies because HIV may have a protective shield. Another theory suggests that the extreme flexibility of HIV allows the virus to evade recognition by the immune system in the same way that it escapes drugs. In addition, superinfection by a second strain of HIV has been documented in individuals who have already established immune responses to initial HIV infection. In other words, one may be infected by two distinctly different strains of HIV at the same time. Researchers are also baffled over the inability to replicate results determined in the lab with results occurring in the body. It also appears that proven vaccine approaches from the past have either failed or that regulatory hurdles have become a major obstacle. In spite of these setbacks, further investigation of those rare patients, who control HIV infection spontaneously even after repeated exposure to HIV may reveal promise. There is also interest in developing an HIV vaccine using a simian (monkey, immunodeficiency virus. According to some researchers transmission of HIV through sex in the natural setting is typically inefficient, (therefore easier to block). Collectively, these findings provide a ray of hope to push on.

*Is this messed up?*

By Pat Stonehouse

I was writing a letter to a friend of mine, writing about how I plan to spend my last several months in this country, things I will miss. I took a mild shift and started writing about things I will miss, as in not be here for. My brother's high school graduation. My counterpart's daughter's first day of primary ccess. I do not want that.

It is more like wanting a very sick person back home to keep fighting, keep dealing with the pain. Just until I get back. You want to be there for them. You want them to know that you are there for them. You would never actually, rationally want it. You would never say it to them or anyone involved. Somehow that seems less selfish. But it is so close to terrible.

Not being able to do anything about it is irrelevant because you wouldn't even if you could and it isn't even a real desire... but I can't deny that it showed up.

And I think about how upset I would be if they died a month before I leave. Then I think about how upset I would be if the die two weeks after I leave. I compare the two and I do not like what I see.

I don't know folks. It has been messing me up for a couple of days now. Just needed to get it out.

*Tips from Kev*



**How to get more passport pages**

Volunteers should fear no more of those pesky Visa stamps take up too much room in our passports. But remember that if the passport doesn't have at least two blank pages remaining at the end, many border posts won't let you pass. There's an easy solution and it's resolved simply in an afternoon. Take your passport to the US Embassy in Mbabane. It's located on the seventh floor of the Central Bank Building just blocks from the Plaza Mall. After signing in and passing through metal detectors, ask the lady in the consulate's office to give you a form that will allow you to have extra pages. Fill it out, hand it back to you and she will tape 24 pages (lettered A-X) in the middle of your passport. You can use it immediately. Estimated time to complete the task: 30 minutes. If this doesn't satisfy your traveling needs for the duration of your Peace Corps service, spend more time at site.

## From Afro pop to Zola: An Intro to music of Southern Africa

by Annie Mohr and Shirley Kenny

Swazi Sojournal



The beautiful Breda Fassie rivals divas across the sea and those who relocated in her continent.

*Living in Swaziland, it's hard to escape popular music. It filters (or booms) from kombis, it is essential at any community event worth going to, school children sing the latest hit as they walk to and from school...*

*Most music that is popular here is from South Africa, but gradually Swazi artists are catching up, including Nana Magagula and various gospel artists.*

*Here is a brief guide to music from Southern Africa, compiled with the assistance of our cashier, Shirley Kenny.*

### African jazz

*Compared to other types of jazz, Shirley describes African jazz as more diverse and all about enhancing the culture. The songs talk about what's happening with day to day living. Drums are instrumentally important, as are other traditional, handmade instruments. Artists include the late Siphon Gumedede and Jimmy Dlodlu.*

### Afro pop

*Shirley describes this as "music for the youth...party music that's vibey, for dancing." Artists include Mafikizolo and Malaika.*

### Kwaito

*Like Afro pop, Shirley also argues that kwaito is for the youth to dance and party to. The beat is distinctly different; the lyrics and artists sometimes a bit more harsh to reflect the reality that many live. Artists include Zola, Mzekezeke, and Brown Dash.*

**Admiral** - South African reggae star

**Brenda Fassie** - South African superstar. A little pop, a little kwaito. Hits: "My Baby," "Midnight Special"

**Brown Dash** - kwaito whiz

**Busi Mhlongo** - More traditional than pop

**C4** - Rumored to be in the vein of Queen Latifah (not literally...). Swazi female rapper who occasionally performs around the kingdom

**Dilon Djindji** - Old, toothless Mozambican folk singer. He'll make your heart melt and your face plastered with a smile with each verse. Maybe you need to see the album cover, but he's an old cutie.

**Ernie Smith** - Shirley's fave, Jamaican musician who won an international pop award

**Frans Dlamini** - Gospel pro from Swaziland

**Freshly Ground** - "Afro-folk" with violin, flute, and lead singer who sometimes sings in Zulu

**Godessa** - hip hop trio from South Africa

**Hugh Masekela** - South African trumpeter

**Issa Bagayogo** - music from Mali

**Jimmy Dlodlu** - African jazz

**Kabelo** - mystery singer without website

**Ladysmith Black Mambazo**—Acoustic traditional singing, consisting of +/- 10 men, fronted by Joseph Shabalala. From Ladysmith in Kwazulu Natal. Famous after their album with Paul Simon.

**Mafikizolo** - Afropop superstars. Hits: "Hey Bhuti," "Meet Me at the River"

**Malaika** - Afropop. Excellent live performers. Hit: "Destiny"

**Metswako** - Violinists merging with a kwaito beat.

**Miriam Makeba** - Traditional South African songstress.

**Mxo** - South African soul singer, compared to Marvin Gaye.

**Mzekezeke** - Kwaito singer. Infamous for wearing face mask when performing.

**Nana** - Deep voiced, jazzy-soul-pop. Referred to as the "Swazi Macy Gray"

**Oliver** - Mixture of traditional and Afropop; from Zimbabwe

**Pitch Black Afro** - Kwaito. Singer of "Ntofonto"

**Qondile** - mellow acoustic guitarist from Mkhaya, specializing in Beatles covers

**Ringo** - Catering to the older crowd and Yemi, a little traditional, a little adult contemporary, with a full back-up band.

**Simphiwe Dana** - Jazzy, smooth-voiced, chill and lovely.

**Siphon Gumedede** - African jazz bass guitarist. "Very rich African jazz," says Shirley.

**Shongwe** - Swazi gospel group; all the rage.

**Sibongile Khumalo** - South African jazz

**Skwatta Kamp** - Kwaito

**Sowteo String Quartet** - If you like "The Lion Sleeps Tonight," you'll love this group. Excellent violinists, but a rather repetitive repertoire when performing live.

**Thandiswa** - More low-key Afro pop (a bit more Afro and less pop), mixed in with traditional Xhosa songs.

**Twasa** - "Soul kwaito." One of the few female kwaito artists. Politically charged lyrics.

**U2** - Irish, not African. But they like hanging out here.

**Vusi Mahlasela** - Sometimes traditional, sometimes jazzy South African artist. Sometimes soothing, sometimes rockin'.

**Wikid Hands, DJ** - spins house and hip hop

**Xhosa music** - i.e. Thandiswa

**Yizo Yizo** - The soundtrack to this TV show is widely heard. "Yizo yizo yizo yizo, ah..."

**Zola** - Arguably the most famous South African kwaito artist.

**Zama** - Sounds like one part Sade, one part Brandy, mixed with a few good shakes of South African flavor.

You know you're  
**HARD CORPS**  
when...

...you've peed on your pajamas because it was too dark in the latrine and then just changed into another pair.

...you brushed your hair too many times out of boredom and it begins to fall out.

...farunkle is no longer a storybook character but a growth coming out of your armpit that's screaming for surgery.





FROM THE VOLUNTEER KITCHEN

## Francie's Four Layers of Dip-a-licious Taco Dip



- 1<sup>st</sup> layer – refried beans
- 2<sup>nd</sup> layer – guacamole or just avocado
- 3<sup>rd</sup> layer – sour cream mixed with taco seasoning
- 4<sup>th</sup> layer – cheese, glorious cheese

Enjoy with chips or veggies. It is preferable to use fresh or not-rotten veggies.

Oh, my. Oh, my!

**Swazi Afternoon** - a song by Steve Kallaugher  
(To the tune of The Kinks' "Sunny Afternoon")

The Peace Corps' taken all my dough  
and stuck me in this tiny home  
sweating on a Swazi afternoon  
and I can't sail my yacht  
borehole water's all I got  
thirsty on a Swazi afternoon

Help me help me help me  
find some shade  
give me two good reasons  
why I ought to stay  
'cause I love to live so pleasantly  
but I live eswatini  
crazy on a sunny afternoon  
in Swaziland

They won't let me get near a car  
not that I could get too far  
I'm barred from leaving this Swazi afternoon  
so I'm sitting here  
dreaming of an ice-cold beer  
sober on a Swazi afternoon

Save me save from this khombi please  
I got two big bomakes putting the squeeze on me  
oh, I love to live so pleasantly  
but I live eswatini  
crazy on a sunny afternoon  
in Swaziland  
in Swaziland

(Note from Steve – "I know this comes from a time when tie-dyed dinosaurs like your parents and me roamed freely about the earth, but c'mon: They're in the Rock'n Roll Hall of fame and it was a big hit.")



Staff profile



## Make Thandi knows how to make Volunteers smile

By Kevin Okun

*Swazi Sojournal*

After changing from a khombi to a bus, sitting next to a bhuti who hasn't bathed in a month, enduring three police check points while riding from site since the crack of dawn, Volunteers can always count on Make Thandi to give them a smile while walking into the Peace Corps office.

As the office secretary since the inception of the office in March 2003, Make Thandi is a fixture of Peace Corps. Her first contact with Peace Corps came about 30 years ago, with a Volunteer teaching her English, maths, and science at her secondary school.

After she stopped working for the Foreign Broadcast Information Services, which is under the U.S. mission, she returned to the embassy searching for employment at about the same time Oghale Oddo first made his way into Swaziland and started setting up the Peace Corps office in Mbabane.

"She did everything, she did purchasing, she did the phones. She was the first person we hired," said Oddo.

Make Thandi said the most enjoyable part of her job is working directly with the Volunteers. "There's so many different people with different characters. I like seeing the Volunteers and helping them a lot," she said.

Volunteers can count on Make Thandi to remember names and even something from home or school. Although she has a superb memory, there's another secret about her. Make Thandi reveals, "I read the resume and aspiration statements of the trainees before they came to Swaziland. Then I compiled a list - name and surname. By the time they are here, I know them. My only problem is to see the person." Make Thandi has visited the following sites: Vincent D'Agostino, Justin Knox, Meredith Aggers and Marnie Cockrill. She understands where the Volunteer is coming from and where the Volunteer is going to.

"I'm impressed with the sacrifice they have to give for us as Swazis, to come and stay with our very very poor people and help them. Most are very very young.

She sees fighting AIDS as something that's in part beyond Swaziland's control. But there is something the country can do to help itself. "Swaziland can have millions of money, but if we can change our behavior, maybe we can see a difference. It can't start at the grassroots, but it has to start at the top. Men must follow."

At the end of the day, after a stressful days at the office, Make Thandi can be and always will be found with a smile. But I couldn't help myself to wonder how can one lady keep a happy face every day? When asked, "Are you just putting on a show to keep our spirits high, Make?" She responded with, "I'm always happy even if I don't see a Volunteer. The phones are still here. They're still ringing. I like talking to people."

## May 2005 - Harvest Moon

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
1 Workers Day	2	3 Peer Support Network Training	4	5 Acension Day • Lifeskills workshop Peace Corps office	6 House on Fire - DJ Bonanza Oskido	7 Trade Fair - Mafikizolo 6 a.m.-6 p.m.
8	9	10 NATI CC counseling skills workshop <i>Mngometulu Girls Camp @ Annie's site</i>	11	12 Justin Knox Brail @ Kandangu	13	14
15	16 Ally's Fundraiser Raffle @ Mkhaya	17 School term 2 begins	18	19	20	21 The Why Not - Malaka • Post-test group meeting in Matata
22	23	24	25	26 Sojo production days Computers in use	27	28
29 Memorial Day	30	31				



---



---



---



---